



COPPICE PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

PUBLIC MINUTES FOR THE 2022/2023 MEETING OF THE TRUST BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12th OF JULY 2023

Trust Board present at the meeting held on <INSERT DATE> approved these minutes as a true and accurate record, and signed on Governor Hub electronically

PRESENT

Carole Hardy (CH), Chair	John Edgar (JE), Vice Chair
Isabelle Linney-Drouet (LD), Trustee	Carina Cuddington (CC), Trustee
Andrew Maitland (AM), Trustee	Neil McDonald (NM), Trustee
Peggy Murphy (PM), Trustee	Mark Chatley (MC), Trust Leader
Annamaria Potgieter (AMP), CFO (Chief Financial Officer)	

IN ATTENDANCE

Stacey Marsh (Clerk), Governance Secretary	
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Yellow highlighted text demonstrates challenge / questions to the Trust representatives

PART A – PUBLIC DISCUSSION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE *(led by Chair)*

1.1 Welcome; ICH (Carole Hardy) welcomed all parties to the meeting at the earlier time of 4.45pm in order to complete the tabled items from the Finance and Audit Committee meeting that did not go ahead this term due to the Loose Primary School Ofsted inspection.

1.2 Apologies; Apologies were received, and accepted, from Andy Lacey, COO (Chief Operating Officer)

1.3 Quorum; The meeting was declared as quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST *(led by Chair)*

2.1 CH gave all parties the opportunity to declare any additional declarations of interest against the agenda to which none were declared.

3. TRUST BOARD MEMBERSHIP

3.1 *No comments made*

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

4.1 Approval of Minutes; Both the public and confidential minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting that took place on the 24th of May 2023 by all present.

Clerk action; JE to mark term 5 minutes as signed on Governor Hub

4.2 Actions Outstanding; Trustees noted the completed actions following the previous meeting, and discussed the following outstanding actions:

- **Actions outstanding from 7th February 2023**

4.2.1 *Ch to arrange a meeting with new Members and report to Trust Board in Term 4;* CH had no further information to provide on a new Member despite communication by email being sent. Trustees confirmed that new members would be required going forward, and this would be discussed in September.

- **Actions outstanding from 29th March 2023**

4.2.2 *MC to investigate qualification requirements around qualification certificates, particularly those who were working in the professional roles already;* MC had conversations with HR who confirmed that the provision of GCSE and qualification certificates were listed as essential criteria on the person specification and so that was the reason that these were asked for, and would need to be provided even if the applicant had worked in the same role elsewhere. If Trustees felt that experience in the same role was suitable, the person specifications would need to be changed so that certificates were listed as desirable.

4.2.3 *All Trustees to complete Cyber Security e-learning before the term 5 Board meeting;* CH and CC were yet to complete the training modules.

Action to carry forward and AL to make contact with resolve log-in issues.

- **Actions outstanding from 24th of May 2023**

4.2.4 *MC to share Trust safeguarding report with Trustees, and school-based reports with ILD (Isabelle Linney-Drouet);* Complete and discussion tabled.

4.2.5 *MC to liaise with the auditor for details of strategic safeguarding training for Trustees;* This action was ongoing and training would be sourced for September 2023 for Trustees to complete.

4.2.6 *JE to send resignation acceptance letter to Katherine Atkinson;* This action was noted as complete.

4.2.7 *AL to make contact with Stuart Thomson to complete Governor appointment checks;* This action was noted as complete.

4.2.8 *AL & AMP to review 2023/24 meeting dates to be presented to Trustees at the term 6 meeting;* Complete and provided ahead of this meeting.

4. TRUST MATTERS (led by Trust Leader)

4.1 Coxheath Building; Coxheath Primary School Governors and staff were made aware of plans, and the school were now in the process of working with the LA (Local Authority) to look at the best location on the school grounds for the new building to be built. More detailed plans were awaited, and the biggest challenge was around the Harlequins wrap around provision that was on the school site. The Harlequins provision was a crucial space for Coxheath Primary School and caused a number of safeguarding concerns over the years. Trustees shared that they felt it was crucial to expand Coxheath Primary School, however felt it important that the LA worked with the Trust to ensure that it was beneficial to all.

MC advised that the next LA visit was scheduled for the 28th of September 2023 where they could highlight their concerns. Ideally, they would want the LA to commission a one form entry expansion to include 7 new classrooms, a library facility and two additional learning spaces. The LA had confirmed that only one new classroom would be ready for September 2024 which would be in a temporary building.

Trustees questioned if they would also be looking for additional space to accommodate trust offices for example funding for additional offices, and challenged if it would be better for the ESFA to commission the build rather than the LA; MC advised that to commission through the ESFA, the trust would need to apply to the Regional Director for a meaningful change, which would still require the school to work alongside the LA.

4.1.2 Trustees discussed rather than the LA commissioning the building project, could they explore the LA providing the funds to the Trust who would then commission the build. This would come with risks around snagging and unforeseen situations but would put the trust in control of the building project.

Action point 1; MC to refer to Giacomo Mazza and Bev Evenden at Coxheath Primary School to look at what they would like the expansion to look like and what opportunities there were for trust-offices and additional provisions to be included.

4.2 Central Team Update; Changes to the COO (Chief Operating Officer) held by AL were shared with the Headteachers and would be taking effect from September 2023.

4.2.1 HR staff were in place, and AMP (Anna Maria Potgieter) had looked at HR and Payroll systems to support moving towards digital processes and away from HR connect and Capita. They had received one quote so far from Brown Jacobson which was cheaper than the existing contract with HR Connect, and 3 quotes for the Payroll system, which is currently under review

4.4 St Katherine's IEB (Interim Executive Board); The incoming Headteacher was due to start in September and it was proposed to add additional members to the IEB in the new year, and to start looking at the move back to a LGB (Local Governing Board).

The IEB gave the Trust greater insight into what was happening within the school and enabled rapid improvement; however the aim was always to move back to an LGB model and with the addition of the new Headteacher, they were closer to this move.

MC proposed for the IEB to continue in term 1 of the new academic year with the aim of reverting back to an LGB for term 2. Trustees approved this proposal and for this information to be shared with parents in September.

5. FINANCE REPORT *(led by CFO)*

5.1 Management Accounts; AMP confirmed there had been no changes in the May management accounts and the schools were still looking at ending with healthy balances that would be used to support future challenges. Going forward, the Trust would be looking at options to invest money back into the schools where appropriate.

5.2 KPIs (Key Performance Indicators); AMP advised that these had slightly changed, and this would be looked at in detail to ensure that the Trust was compliant with statutory regulations.

5.2.1 For extended services there was a difference between schools with Coxheath Primary School showing as having less lettings than others which was linked to them not having a pool

St Katherine's School showed as having more administrative staff allocated to lettings and extended services.

5.2.2 Staffing costs were closer to 80% for this year, however in future years this number increased.

5.3 Cashflow; AMP shared that there were no issues to report for the Trust cashflow accounts. The previously discussed savings account was in the process of being opened and the 30-day notice account with Lloyds Bank was operational and received interest.

5.3.1 Trustees referred to the Coxheath Primary School expansion and questioned to apportion some funds for that project; AMP advised that the Trust had been in discussion with the LA around the additional provisions within the expansion that would need to be funded by the Trust and this could be financed by the unrestricted funds.

5.3.2 AMP assured Trustees that the reserves were increasing at Trust level and remained in-line with the reserves policy.

5.4 Draft budgets; AMP shared that she had provided "Version 2" of the draft budget ahead of the meeting. This highlighted no major changes for Loose Primary School and Coxheath Primary School, however, did detail changes to pupil numbers for St Katherine's School. Local Authority allocations were not yet finalised and so the numbers could grow beyond 65.

MC outlined that the year 6 cohort for September 2023 would include 71 children and so they had decided to change the structure of the year group. There will be two larger classes across the year group, however they would be split out in the morning sessions supported by members of the leadership team for Maths and English. This would be evaluated termly, and Trustees informed of progress.

5.4.1 Within "version 2" of the St Katherine's School budget, it shows that they are the most vulnerable school with the lowest ratio of leadership support. When an additional member of staff was built into the budget from January 2024, it impacted the budget detrimentally. This was discussed with the incoming Headteacher who ideally wanted to bring the school in-line with the leadership structures at Loose Primary School and Coxheath Primary School, and an alternative model was discussed.

Item continued in confidential minutes

5.4.2 Recorded in confidential minutes

5.4.3 KPIS demonstrated that staffing costs went beyond the optimal 80%, and these were being looking at closely; the margin was due to the lowered to 75% by the ESFA. This would mean that the Trust would need to ensure that they were looking to reduce these numbers where possible.

5.4.4 **Trustees challenged what the recovery plan would be for the BFR;** The schools were encouraged to look at every single cost, every contract and when staff resigned if the posts needed to be replaced. TAs had been reorganised at Coxheath Primary School for September, and other schools would also be looking at their support staff models.

5.4.5 AMP advised that income forecasts were prudent due to learnings from previous years and further information was anticipated this term. The general feeling was that the whole education sector faced the same challenges.

5.4.6 **Trustees challenged what “must do” projects had been budgeted for;** AMP advised that from the recent condition surveys most work had been built into the estates management plan and were not significant. The next phase of condition surveys were planned for August and changes were anticipated. The reports would be scrutinised for urgency to ensure safe and secure sites and impact to ensure that quality teaching is prioritised.

5.4.7 **Trustees questioned how confident the Trust was around additional places at Coxheath being filled from September 2024;** Trustees were assured that the LA would be funding 100% of places from September 2024 and would receive guaranteed funding for 7 years.

5.4.8 Trustees unanimously approved “version 2 of the budget” for Coxheath Primary School and Loose Primary School.

AMP left the meeting.

6. LOCAL GOVERNING BOARDS FEEDBACK *(led by Chair)*

6.1 Loose Primary School; This term, the LGB trialled a new meeting agenda that focussed purely on monitoring that Governors had undertaken and this was received well by all parties and they will be looking to roll this out into next year for terms 2, 4 and 6. Within the meeting the Headteacher, Trevor North led the discussions around the evidence Governors collected within their monitoring reports to see how this linked with the Ofsted framework. Terms 1, 3, and 5 would continue with written Headteacher reports for Governors to challenge where appropriate.

Trustees questioned if this model would be appropriate for other schools within the trust; JE suggested that the model would fit other schools, however it would be worthwhile to revisit the monitoring session for Governors from earlier in the year.

Trustees questioned if Trevor North planned to share the monitoring structure with other Headteachers;

Action point 2; MC to encourage Trevor North to share monitoring pilot with other Headteachers.

6.1.2 Trustees discussed how they could be more directive with Governors around monitoring and how they could ensure that monitoring was undertaken consistently across the schools.

Action point 3; LGB Chairs to liaise with MC and Headteachers to look at a consistent monitoring model for the new academic year that will form a minimum standard for Governors to work within.

6.1.3 *Recorded in confidential minutes*

6.2 Coxheath Primary School; Clare Nursey, the Chair of the LGB confirmed that she would be happy to be reappointed as Chair for 2023/24, and Suzy Wenham advised that she would be stepping down at the end of term 6 which meant that the LGB would need to undertake a parent election in the new academic year.

6.2.1 Clare Nursey had contacted CH to voice concerns over the monitoring responsibilities and would be keen to understand how the pilot at Loose Primary School went.

6.2.2 Clare Nursey also reported that the LGB were not clear on the role of the Educational Curriculum Committee and requested for this to be looked at further.

Action point 4; JE and CH to discuss the communication around the Education and Curriculum Committee and provide clarity around how the LGBs linked in with the committee.

6.3 St Katherine’s School; Behaviour was the forefront of all discussions at the IEB particularly around year 6 which had continued to be a challenge across the school.

6.3.1 A positive review of early years and safeguarding had taken place with action plans produced which the school was working through.

6.3.2 Going forward, the school would benefit from more IEB members / Governors to ensure that discussions were broad and balanced.

6.3.3 *Recorded in confidential minutes.*

7. EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

10.1 Committee Constitution; Attendance at the term 5 Education and Curriculum committee meeting was low with Coxheath primary School being the only school represented. Trustees discussed the option of having 2 Governors from each school assigned to the committee, however this would need further consideration.

10.2 Committee highlights; MC presented the updated trust-wide vision for the curriculum moving forward which included the schools being given more autonomy around their curriculums. Whilst the need to align the curriculums was previously important, now that the schools had embedded the curriculums across the schools, it was now possible for teachers and subject leaders to make these specific to the school.

11. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

11.1 Outcomes; MC confirmed that SATS results were shared nationally today and they were broadly positive across all areas. For KS2 (Key Stage 2), they were broadly in line with the national picture with particular strength in Maths at Coxheath Primary School. St Katherine's School results were in-line with last year which the trust were pleased with given the context of the year that pupils at St Katherine's had. Loose Primary School showed strength in their Greater Depth results.

Trustees challenged how confident the trust were in their assessment processes; Teacher Assessment continued to be developing with a small element of staff lacking confidence with their judgements.

For Maths, the trust had moved to assessment models within the White Rose curriculum and the trust had seen progress in how well the assessment marked against the curriculum that the children were taught.

11.1.2 Trust-wide training took place in term 5 within the staff meetings and had moved on to an instructional coaching model for Coxheath Primary School and Loose Primary School with further work planned around mindset.

11.2 Trademark Behaviours; During the recent Trust INSET day, discussions took place about the Trust vision and values and trademark behaviours with three documents shared with staff. Activities took place around why people would want to join the Trust and what the benefits of being part of the Trust were. Staff also looked at what the Trust growth plan should be and how staff members encourage others to join. Feedback was shared with John Edgar who to look at in further detail.

11.2.1 When staff were asked what they felt were the challenges, priorities and opportunities, they shared that they wanted more TAs supporting in classes like they were previously.

Headteachers at Coxheath Primary School and Loose Primary School had shared the rationale behind the changes to TAs within classrooms and these will continue.

Trustees challenged what the next steps will be following the INSET session; MC shared that the staff feedback would be used to build into the next Trust plan to ensure that staff voice was visible and to provide further clarity to staff around the Trust priorities.

Trustees suggested that it would be worthwhile to add in the opportunity for staff to share their ideas around how the Trust could overcome the challenges.

11.3 KMA (Kent MAT (Multi Academy Trust) Alliance) Conference; John Edgar and Andy Lacey attended a conference held by the KMA with three speakers in attendance; Christine McInnes, Director of Education from KCC (Kent County Council), Leora Cruddas from the CST (Confederation of Schools Trust) and Sir David Carter. The conference was based around the future of academies and was particularly insightful.

11.3.1 KCC were particularly neutral on the future of academies and was a brief update from the Christine McInnes including the ongoing challenges for the SEND provision.

Leora Cruddas from the CST talked about how leadership needs to change in academies and what academies should be doing within that.

Sir David Carter spoke about how it is the responsibility of all schools to support every child and how academies could do more to ensure they were doing just that. He spoke about the future of academies needing to add strength through mergers and increasing their capacity.

11.3.2 Off the back of the conference, John Edgar looked at the Trust growth strategy and suggested that the next steps for Coppice were to look at barriers around staff recruitment and retentions and to check that their people approach was appropriate.

MC referred to the recent "Commissioning High Quality Trusts" document that was published in June that highlighted more transparency around growth of academies and the decision-making processes within that.

Action point 5 – MC to send “Commissioning High Quality Trusts document to Trustees

Ideally the Regional Schools Commissioner is looking for academies to be strong, and were encouraging trusts to work together collaboratively, and future decisions would be made with evidence that trusts were meeting the 5 pillars model.

Going forward, it would be worthwhile for the Trust to consider how they could form a relationship with the Regional Schools Director.

11.3.3 Trustees suggested that it would be worthwhile to put together a small working party to look at the Trust growth plan in more detail and to be supported by the Headteachers to share their visions for their schools within the Trust. Trustees agreed for the working party to be made up from Mark Chatley, Carole Hardy, John Edgar and Steve Knowles (Member).

Priorities for next year -

11.3.4 When discussing the priorities for 2023/24, MC shared that these included continued work around the Progression Pathways for staff, Senior Leadership staff, focussed strategy for Growth, St Katherine’s School, trust-wide collaboration with all schools bought in, and behaviour challenges.

Moving into the new academic year, MC shared that for the first time, there would be three strong Headteachers in position who shared the ethos, values and the direction of the Trust which would make a huge difference to MC.

Trustees asked what staff MC felt that he needed to ensure that he could deliver the priorities next year and challenges what capacity there was within the central team to support MC;

11.3.5 Trustees thanked JE for his work around the growth plan.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

9.1 Trustees were assured by MC that there were no concerns to be made aware of related to Safeguarding or Health and Safety.

10. CHAIRS ACTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 Chairs Actions; CH confirmed that she had made no actions since the last meeting to make Trustees aware of.

10.2 Chairs Correspondence; CH highlighted that she had not received the Accounting Officer letter from the ESFA however this had since been shared with her and had no concerns over the content.

11. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

11.1 Local Governing Boards; Coxheath Parent Governor, Simon Malone’s term of office was due on the 21st of September 2023, and had confirmed that he would be willing to stand for a further term of two years.

Trustees challenged why the term of office for Governors was two years; The clerk advised that the term was two years within the Scheme of Delegation.

Trustees agreed to amend the Scheme of Delegation for the LGB’s so that Governors’ terms were periods of 4 years.

Action point 6; CH & JE to change Scheme of Delegation for Governors term of office to be 4 years with effect from September 2023.

11.1.1 A further Parent Governor vacancy was also available at Coxheath Primary School from September due to Suzy Wenham stepping down

Action point 7; Parent Governor elections for 2 Parent Governors to be run at Coxheath Primary School in September with Simon Malone nominated for 1 vacancy with decision to be ratified by the Trust Board.

Clerk Action; List of Trustee term of office dates to be provided to CH.

11.1.2 Trustees noted the letter from David Whitty, Chief Executive of the ESFA.

11.1.3 CC shared that from September 2023, there were no changes to policies and procedures within the updated ESFA Academies Handbook, however Trust Boards would no longer be required to meet 6 times each year. There was also referenced to ensuring that Trusts could demonstrate effective estates management which would be important to monitor for the Trust given the changes to the COO role and Andy Lacey moving to the position of consultant.

11.2 Trustee Membership; JE term of office was due to finish on the 23rd of July 2023. JE confirmed that he was happy to remain in the role of Trustee. Trustees unanimously agreed to recommend JE to the board of Members for a further 4 years.

Action point 8; CH to contact board of members to renew JE's term of office from the 12th July 2023.

12. TRUSTEE TRAINING *(led by Chair)*

12.1 Training completed; Trustees confirmed that they had completed the e-learning around Cyber Security and GDPR with only CH and CC outstanding.

13. POLICIES AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS *(led by Chair)*

13.1 Trust Lettings Policy; Trustees approved the updated policies for all schools and the wider trust.

13.2 Extended Services Policy; Trustees approved the updated policy to take effect from the 1st of September 2023.

13.3 GDPR and Data Protection Policy; Trustees approved the updated policy, action plan and subject access request documentation

13.4 Risk Register; Trustees noted the Risk Register received ahead of the meeting and made suggestions to changing certain items.

- Page 1, update item to a medium risk
- Addition of diversity of Senior management roles across the trust.
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Action point 9; JE to email AL with changes to the Risk Register including updating the layout to include the 4 T's
Trustees requested for more oversight to be given to the Risk Register by the Headteachers and LGBs particularly around risks within the curriculum for each school.

Action point 10 CC to contact MC with examples of school-based risks to be included within the Risk Register.

14. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

14.1 Trustees confirmed that item 4.3 5.4.1 and 16.1.3 were to be recorded as confidential

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

16. FINAL REMARKS

16.1 Next meeting date; Wednesday 18th of October at 5.30pm to be held at Loose Primary School.

16.2 Meeting close; Trustees noted that this would be the last meeting for the current Governance Professional, Stacey Marsh, and wished her well for the future.

16.2.1 JE gave their apologies for the Education and Curriculum committee meeting on the 2nd of October, and the Finance and Audit Committee meeting on the 4th of October due to a holiday; CH volunteered to hold the position of the Education and Curriculum committee and gave apologies for the Finance and Audit Committee on the 4th of October.

16.2.3 CH thanked all attendees for their contribution to the meeting and wished everyone an enjoyable summer break. *The meeting concluded at 8.00pm*

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	UPDATE
Matters arising from term 29th March 2023 meeting			
	<p>All Trustees to complete Cyber Security e-learning before next Board meeting.</p> <p>24th May Update; CH and CC are yet to complete the training modules sent by AL. This needs to be completed by the 31st of May 2023 as the transition date is the 1st of June 2023.</p> <p><i>Action; CC and CH to complete Cyber security training before 31st May 2023</i></p> <p>12th July update; CH and CC were yet to complete the training modules.</p> <p><i>Action to carry forward and AL to make contact with resolve log-in issues.</i></p>	CC / CH / AL	AL has re-issued log in details to School-PRO to enable access to training modules
Matters arising from this meeting;			
1.	MC to refer back to Giacomo Mazza and Bev Evenden at Coxheath Primary School to look at what they would like the expansion to look like and what opportunities there were for trust-offices and additional provisions to be included.	MC	
2.	MC to encourage Trevor North to share monitoring pilot with other Headteachers.	MC	
3.	LGB Chairs to liaise with MC and Headteachers to look at a consistent monitoring model for the new academic year that will form a minimum standard for Governors to work within.	MC	
4.	JE and CH to discuss the communication around the Education and Curriculum Committee and provide clarity around how the LGBs linked in with the committee.	JE / CH	
5.	MC to send "Commissioning High Quality Trusts document to Trustees	MC	
6.	CH & JE to change Scheme of Delegation for Governors term of office to be 4 years with effect from September 2023.	CH / JE	Updated SoD published on Trust website
7.	Parent Governor elections for 2 Parent Governors to be run at Coxheath Primary School in September with Simon Malone nominated for 1 vacancy with decision to be ratified by the Trust Board.	Coxheath LGB / Trust Board	3 nominations received so school now running a ballot
8.	CH to contact board of members to renew JE's term of office from the 12 th July 2023.	CH	
9.	JE to email AL with changes to the Risk Register including updating the layout to include the 4 T's	JE / AL	
10.	CC to contact MC with examples of school-based risks to be included within the Risk Register.	CC / MC	
Clerk Actions			
	JE to mark term 5 minutes as signed on Governor Hub	Clerk	Complete

	List of Trustee term of office dates to be provided to CH.	Clerk	Complete
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APPROVED